

The Habit of Prayer
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
July 30, 2017

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

“When joy and prayer are married their first born child is gratitude” therefore “have nothing to do with that which you cannot ask God’s blessing upon, have nothing to do with it, for if God cannot bless it, you may depend upon it the devil has cursed it.” ~ **C.S. Lewis**

We can approach our Lord at any time, at any place and on any occasion. We can approach with confidence.

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:16

“The monarch whose palace was in Shushan would have not approached him unless he sent for them, but the King of Kings has called for all his people, and they may come at all times. They were slain who went in unto the King Ahasuerus, unless he stretched out his scepter to them; but our King never withdraws his scepter, it is always stretched out, and whosoever desires to come to him may come now, and come at any time.” ~ **C.S. Lewis**

So what does pray without ceasing mean?

1) Never abandon prayer!

“Long as they live must Christians pray, for only while they pray they live.”¹

“If for a while the heavens are as brass and your prayer only echoes in thunder above your head, pray on; if month after month your prayer appears to be miscarried, and no reply has been vouchsafed to you, yet still continue to draw nigh unto the Lord. Do not abandon the mercy-seat for any reason whatever. If it be a good thing that you have been asking for, and you are sure it is according to the divine will, if the vision tarry wait for it, pray, weep, entreat, wrestle, agonize till you get that which you are praying for. If your heart be cold in prayer, do not restrain prayer until your heart warms, but pray your soul unto heat by the help of the ever blessed Spirit who helpeth our infirmities.”

We need to pray most when we don’t feel like it or see the need.

“Never, never, never renounce the habit of prayer, or your confidence in its power.”

Should you ever feel like you can’t pray, be sure to have those who will pray for you. Godly prayer warriors are so important!

2) Never suspend regular prayer!

“Though all hours are alike to me, I find it profitable to meet with God as set periods, for these seem to me to be like the winding of the clock.”

We must be intentional about our prayers.

Family, friends, **lost**, Church, sick, prodigals, etc.

Whether they know it or not or we know it or not, others are counting on us to pray; we can’t be haphazard in our prayers, but very focused and intentional.

When is your regular prayer time? Do you have one? Will you start one?

3) In between regular prayer, continue in prayer.

¹ General outline and quotes by Charles Spurgeon unless otherwise noted.

“While our hands are busy with the world, let your hearts still talk with God.”

“He who prays without ceasing uses many little darts and hand-grenades of godly desire, which he casts forth at every available interval. Sometimes he will blow the furnace of his desires to a great heat in regular prayer, and as a consequence at other times, the sparks will continue to rise up to heaven in the form of brief words, and looks, and desires.”

We need to have our intentional times of prayer and then our times of praying as our day continues. These may take the form of thoughts, actions and actual prayers.

4) Always be in the Spirit of prayer!

We must allow the Holy Spirit to guide our prayers.

Praying the Bible by Donald Whitney

While it is good to have a prayer list and to pray for people and situations, we also want to listen and respond to the Lord in what He may be saying. We must always remember prayer is a two way street, not only do we talk, but are to also listen.

5) Let our actions be consistent with our prayer, in fact, a continuation of our prayers.

“There can be a praying without ceasing before the Lord, though there be many pausing’s in what the most of men would call prayer. Pray then without ceasing, my brother. Let thy whole life be praying. If thou changest the method, yet change not the pursuit; but continue still to worship, still to adore.”

May our actions be the result of our prayers. If our actions don’t reflect our prayers, may you ask God to do a work.

We should pray for ourselves: our heart, mind, attitude, thoughts, words and intentions.

“Satan’s object will be to distract the mind, to throw it off the rails, to divert its aim, but let us resolve before God, we will not turn asked from following hard after him. Sire Thomas Abbey had for many years practiced family prayer regularly; he was elected Lord Mayor of London, and on the night of his election he must be present at a banquet, but when the time came for him to call his family together in prayer, having no wish either to be a Pharisee or to give up his practice, he excused himself to the guests in this way, - he said he had an important engagement with a very dear friend, and they must excuse him for a few minutes. It was most true, his dearest friend was the Lord Jesus, and family prayer was an important engagement; and so he withdrew for a while to the family altar, and in that respect prayed without ceasing. We sometimes allow “good” things to interrupt our prayer, and thus making them evil.”

“It is said of Sir Henry Havelock that every morning when the march began at six, he always arose at four, that he might not miss his time of the reading of Scripture and communion with His God. If we have not time we must make time, for if God has given us time for secondary duties, he must have given up time for primary ones, and to draw near to him is a primary duty, and we must let nothing set it on one side.”

“When Edward Payson was a student at College, he found he had so much to do to attend his classes and prepare for examinations, that he could not spend as much time as he should in private prayer.; but, at last, waking up to the feeling that he was going back in divine things through his habits, he took due time for devotion and he asserts in his diary that he did more in his studies in a single week after he had spent time with God in prayer, that he had accomplished in twelve months before. God can multiply our ability to make us of time. If we give the Lord his due, we shall have enough for all necessary purposes.”

Prayer Focus:

- I will commit to be a person of prayer.
- If I have not already, I will decide today when my regular prayer time will be.
- I will begin or continue a prayer list and not give up!
- I will stand in the gap for others!